**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Emergency Placements and Emergency Reviews**

* Sometimes, a placement is needed for a child without any forewarning, or the opportunity to follow the usual placement planning process. These are termed ‘Emergency Placements’ and may arise for a number of reasons, including if a child’s current placement breaks down, or the child is at risk of sexual exploitation or gang involvement.

**Receiving Emergency Admissions (in line with the Statement of Purpose)**

* On occasions, WSCC children’s homes may be asked to accommodate a child in an emergency. This is only possible if the home’s Statement of Purpose states that this is permitted and the home is able to meet any specialist needs of the child.
* The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that any emergency placements do not have a negative impact on children already living in the home. This process is supported by completing an Impact Risk Assessment.
* The Registered Manager has the authority to decline an emergency admission, ensuring they provide written confirmation of the reasons for declining the referral being provided within 24 hours.
* Where it is stated within the home’s Statement of Purpose, the Registered Manager will ensure a specific routine is in place for receiving emergency placements which will include having:
* A checklist for admissions readily available;
* A vacant bedroom with appropriate facilities, in a state of readiness;
* Easy to prepare basic food and drink accessible for staff to prepare day or night;
* A strategy for the redeployment of staff to deal with the emergency admission.
* Staff in the home will need to be trained and skilled in the admission and care of children, where their full background may not be known.
* Managers should ensure that where an emergency admission takes place a planning meeting also known as an Emergency Review is held within 72 hours of admission.

**Emergency Placement Procedure**

* In the event of a referral for an Emergency Placement, the person receiving the referral should do all they can to follow the normal admissions procedures. Any decision to admit a child in an emergency must be based on a proper assessment of the available information.
* This assessment is likely to be carried out from information provided over the telephone or by email. Referral forms still need to be completed and received before the child is admitted.
* The child’s social worker should provide as much information as possible to the home to enable them to make a full and informed decision about accepting the emergency placement.
* As a minimum, the following information will be required at the time of the placement:
* The contact arrangements that may be permitted between the child and his/her parents, siblings, relatives and friends
* A copy of the child’s [Health Care Plan](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/health_care_plan.html) or, if this is not available, details of any healthcare or medical needs/requirements that the home should be aware of
* Copies or information relating to any Court Orders that may be required or influence the child’s placement
* The person administering this process must keep a record of the matters that are not undertaken, and pass this to the chair of the Emergency Review so that they can be followed up.

**Criteria and Timing of Emergency Reviews**

* An emergency review meeting must be held within 72 hours of any emergency admission.
* The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain whether the child should remain at the home, or if it is in that child’s interests to move to a different placement.
* Discussion around ongoing suitability of the placement should take place and if it is found that this is not an appropriate placement, an alternative placement should be discussed and any actions to follow up agreed.
* Emergency Reviews will normally be arranged and led by the Registered Manager (unless the child has an [Independent Reviewing Officer](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/indep_reviewing_officer.html)). This responsibility may be delegated to a member of staff.
* The Registered Manager should ensure the people listed below contribute to the Emergency Review:
* The child's social worker;
* The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for the child;
* The child;
* The child's parents;
* A representative from the child’s previous placement (as appropriate)
* The child's Key Worker, if known, or other member of staff.
* Before the meeting takes place, the Registered Manager should try to gather all relevant documents such as risk assessments, chronology, care plan and all other relevant background information.
* The meeting should consider whether the placement is suitable for the child and the child’s Placement Plan should be updated as a result.

**Links to related documents:**

Impact Risk Assessment